



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2009 – 002

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Joe Simpson, Wyoming Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

DATE: January 9, 2009

SUBJECT: Secondary School Course Coding



This memo serves as official notification to the Wyoming School Districts that the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) is adopting the Secondary School Course Classification System developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

Overview

Given the number of state and federal reporting requirements, the need for a common course coding system among Wyoming high schools has emerged.

The benefits of a common course coding system include the evolution of a full course catalog that will potentially eliminate other data collections, increased efficiency in determining class placement for transferring students between high schools, and increased efficiency at the post-secondary level in regards to enrollment, financial assistance, and placement decisions. The implementation of common course coding also opens the door for more longitudinal studies that will assist policy makers in their efforts to increase student performance.

Process

A taskforce consisting of WDE and school district personnel has been established to guide the process of instituting the NCES codes state-wide. The *Common Course Code Implementation Taskforce* had its first meeting on December 3, 2008, in Riverton where nine pilot study districts were identified and a pilot study timeline was agreed upon.

The main objective with the pilot schools is to identify and eliminate obstacles with the common course coding process, in addition to developing a best practices document that will help the remaining districts map their existing courses to the NCES codes in an efficient manner. Both manual and automated methods will be tested.

The NCES data handbook, **Secondary School Course Classification System: School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED) - June 2007** (Publication # NCES 2007-341), can be downloaded from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007341.pdf>, or you may contact the Department to request a copy.

All districts are welcome to participate in the taskforce meetings. Notice of time and location will be sent out to all the districts prior to the meetings. If there is a point of contact from your

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district that you wish to be involved with the pilot study, please email the name and contact information to Geir Solvang (contact information included at the end of this memo).

Goal

The WDE hopes to have NCES codes on the graduating seniors' transcripts beginning with the class of 2010. Since course catalogs change from year to year, WDE would not expect a transcript for a 2010 graduate to have pre-senior courses listed with associated NCES codes; only courses attended during the student's senior year would have NCES codes attached. Similarly, for the class of 2011, we anticipate that all junior and senior level courses will have associated NCES codes on the transcripts. By 2013, our goal is to have all courses listed on a transcript with corresponding NCES codes. Regarding transfer students from other states, it is not required that the out-of-state courses be listed with an NCES code unless the school of origin includes it in the transfer documents.

Please note that it is still required that all transcripts for the 2009 graduating seniors be delivered to the department via the Wyoming Transcript Center (WTC) during the summer of 2009. (As indicated above, the NCES course codes are not required to be in place by then).

Questions & Contacts

Please direct all questions regarding the course code project to Geir Solvang (gsolva@educ.state.wy.us) who will forward the inquiries to the appropriate WDE staff and/or taskforce members. The Department is looking forward to this joint venture and is committed to providing assistance as we move forward with this project.

GS

Cc: District Curriculum Coordinators
Technology Directors
High School Principals
High School Counselors
Post-Secondary Admissions Officers
Wyoming Community College Commission